

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
BIOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF WASHINGTON

A REVIEW OF THE GENUS *PEDIOECETES* IN
COLORADO.

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The doubtful status of the genus *Pedioecetes* in Colorado has caused much confusion in the minds of those engaged in a study of the birds of the State, all of whom, the present writer trusts, will welcome what appears to be an accurate classification and adjustment of this interesting group.

A study of the literature permits but one conclusion as regards this genus, which is, that its status is decidedly chaotic, a condition dating from the publication of the first faunal lists on Colorado birds. A brief review of the treatment accorded *Pedioecetes* in the two most important of these works may be of assistance in comprehending this confusion and the reasons for its existence.

The first important* paper on the birds of Colorado as a unit, appeared in 1897, under the authorship of the late Prof. Wells W. Cooke,† in which all Colorado Sharp-tailed Grouse are included under one form, *campestris*; a note being added to the effect that "It may be that the Sharp-tailed Grouse of Routt County are variety *columbianus* * * *."

Despite this note, however, the first supplement to this work, published in 1898‡, refutes the suggestion, definitely assigning

* A few local lists, etc., had appeared previous to Prof. Cooke's, but they are all compiled in his work, and no specific references are necessary here.

† The Birds of Colorado. By W. W. Cooke. Bull. No. 37, Agricultural Experiment Station, Fort Collins, Colo., March, 1897.

‡ Further Notes on the Birds of Colorado. By W. W. Cooke. Bull. No. 44, Agri. Exper. Sta., Fort Collins, Colo., March, 1898.

all *Pedioecetes* within the State to *campestris*, a conclusion also continued in the second supplement in 1900.*

The third supplement to this work appeared in 1909,† with something like order reached, when both *columbianus* and *campestris* were admitted to a place in the list, but with an impossible range attributed to the former and the theory advanced that *campestris* was then extinct in the State.

Following this came Mr. Sclater's "History of the Birds of Colorado," published in 1912,‡ which more than ever confused the subject by again including all Colorado examples under *campestris*, and thus the matter has stood to the evident inconvenience of the taxonomist as well as the local student.

That a thorough investigation would be necessary, was readily apparent, and this it has been the privilege of the writer to carry out, with results of more than ordinary interest, when considering the contradictory character of the literature referred to.

Decidedly the most important feature of the work has been the discovery of an apparently unrecognized race which may be described at this point, as it occupies a most vital position in unraveling the tangle.

For this new subspecies, I propose the name:

***Pedioecetes phasianellus jamesi*, sp. nov.**

JAMES'S SHARP-TAILED GROUSE.§

Chars. subsp.—Similar in part to both *Pedioecetes p. columbianus* and *P. p. campestris*, but with relatively longer wings and tail, shorter tarsi, and with bill shorter, heavier and more acutely curved than in either.

Description.—Type; adult male; Colorado Museum of Natural History, No. 4951; three miles west of Castle Rock, Colo., February 15, 1916; collected by A. H. Burns.

Coloration of upper parts, including rump and upper tail-coverts, similar to *columbianus*, but lighter; pileum and occiput dusky, feathers more narrowly edged with light rufous, not banded, tipped with creamy white;

* The Birds of Colorado. By W. W. Cooke. Bull. No. 56, Agri. Exper. Sta., Ft. Collins, Colo., May, 1900. A second appendix to Bull. No. 37.

† The Birds of Colorado.—Third Supplement. By Wells W. Cooke. Auk, Vol. XXVI, 1909, pp. 400-423.

‡ A History of the Birds of Colorado. By W. L. Sclater. Witherby & Co., London, 1912.

§ It is with much pleasure that I propose to name this new subspecies in honor of Mr. Harry C. James of Denver, a veteran sportsman, through whose interest and enthusiasm the bird was first brought to my attention, and through whose personal efforts many of the specimens were secured.



Breast feathers from *Pedioecetes p. columbianus*, *campestris*
and *jamesi*.

No. 4980 *P. p. columbianus* ♀ ad. Jan. 16, 1916. Aspen, Colo.

No. 4258 *P. p. campestris* ♀ ad. Jan. 28, 1915. Laird, Colo.

No. 4951 *P. p. jamesi* (Type) ♂ ad. Feb. 15, 1916. Castle Rock, Colo.

